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AMERICAN STATISTICAL ASSOCIATION.

NEW SERIES, No. 104.

DECEMBER, 1913.

OUR COMING SEVENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY.

BY JOHN KOREN.

At a quarterly meeting of the Association held about fifty years ago, John Ward Dean, its faithful recording secretary for many years, "drew the attention of the members to the fact that soon a quarter of a century would be completed since the first meeting was held for the organization of this Association. He thought it desirable that the event should be noticed in some manner by the Association. An address, in which the progress of statistical science during the last twenty-five years and what this Association had done in that time should be shown, would be an appropriate mode of observing the occasion. This address should be printed, and if so it would no doubt do much towards furthering the objects of the Association." (From the minutes of the meeting.)

What cause for jubilation the founders of the American Statistical Association had as they looked back upon its service during twenty-five years is a story to be told in detail elsewhere. To the super-critical of our age, their record of things done may seem brief enough; yet theirs was the fine distinction of having kindled and kept alive a keen and discriminating interest in statistical work in the days of its infancy in the United States. At that time to have conceived of statistical inquiry as a science, always spelling it with a capital S, betokened courage and rare confidence in the future.

Let no one imagine that these early pioneers in our field were merely a group of parochial enthusiasts. Through corresponding members in fifteen states and in foreign countries they kept in touch with outside affairs and through special representatives took part in international statistical meetings. One of their early efforts was to assemble all available statistical publications by gift and purchase. Constant mention

is made in the records of "donations" to their library. But academic interest alone did not content them; they labored valiantly to instigate and vitalize statistical work in various directions, especially that to be undertaken by the federal government and by the states. They memorialized Congress in behalf of the census work, urged legislation for the improvement of vital statistics, etc. Also they encouraged each other to individual effort in statistical inquiry. Indeed, it was at one time almost a condition of fellowship that a certain amount of statistical work should be undertaken, or that papers on statistical subjects should be prepared.

Since Mr. Dean wrote the words quoted above, fifty years have been added to the history of our Association. One may fairly say that it has been a period of unbroken activity. There have been times of discouragement and depression when individual as well as collective efforts were at a comparatively low ebb; but always the faith has been kept alive in the things for which the Association stands. The organization has been kept intact. For twenty-five years the new series of our publications have appeared bearing witness to an amount of scientific interest and research of which no man need be ashamed. The Association is still the bond between those who follow statistical pursuits, speaking for their ideals and interests. And may we not modestly assert that in recent years the Association has become rejuvenated and may look forward to a larger usefulness? Its widening circle of supporters is growing more and more responsive. At no time has a demand for competent statistical work been as great as today. To the Association this means that a greater sphere of activity awaits it. The profession of statistics has by no means outgrown the formative period. It is therefore, perhaps, even more urgent than before that wise direction should be had and the ideals held high.

To commemorate the past achievements of a dead or dying organization may be a solemn duty, but it is not exhilarating. It is not so much the thought of what our Association has done, of its venerable age which places it in the forefront among similar organizations and high in the list of American Scientific bodies, that should give a real zest to our seventy-fifth anniver-

sary, but that we can safely reckon upon a future full of opportunities for increasing usefulness, confident in our vigor and enthusiastic over the duties before us.

Looking forward, then, it would be unsatisfactory to leave records of meetings as a sole memorial of our seventy-fifth anniversary. The occasion is worthy of larger effort than papers and addresses, no matter how able and timely they may be. We boast, with becoming modesty I hope, of world-wide interest in statistical endeavor. Therefore our anniversary should be productive of something permanently valuable not only to our own local parishes but to the world. It has been conceived that we can do this by publishing a memorial volume setting forth the progress and development in statistics for each of the civilized countries. The plan is, briefly, to secure the coöperation of men of the highest authority each of whom shall contribute an article for his country on this subject. The idea is not in the air but on the way to be realized. Well-known statisticians abroad to whom the plan has been broached have greeted it with enthusiasm and enough of them have given personal assurances of their willingness to participate to warrant success.

Among these men may be mentioned Sir J. Athelstane Baines (England); Dr. Würzburger (Germany); Professor Felix Faure (France); Professor Stuart (Holland); Professor Mandello (Hungary); Doctor Takarabe (Japan); Dr. Armand Julin (Belgium)—to take a few at random.

Steps have been taken for the proper representation of the following countries: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, England, Finland, France, Germany, Holland, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Norway, Russia, Sweden, Switzerland and of course the United States. This means that articles will be written for each of these countries. It is hoped to add still others.

In order to secure some degree of uniformity of treatment, an outline has been prepared for the use of the prospective contributors. The suggestions offered, which are summarized in the following, have been put under three heads:

1. *Historical.* Brief sketch of the beginnings of official statistical work with reference to earlier statistical undertak-

ings by private individuals or organizations. Scope of earliest legislation. The most notable steps in subsequent development, etc.

2. *Present Statistical Organization.* Its basis in legislation. Scope of work in demography, economic, and social statistics. The personnel at the head of statistical offices; their opportunity for training, whether chiefly through practical work or through academic education. Enumeration of regular and occasional publications.

3. *Future Development of Statistical Organization.* Present general defects. The expansion necessary in view of the rapid economic and social changes with their manifold demands upon statistical research, as a basis for sound legislation and practical endeavor. The trend toward international coöperation in statistical work and its desirability. Possible needs of better training in statistics and larger inducements to take up statistics as a professional career.

It is of course not expected that the contributors will confine themselves to the narrow outline here summarized. So far as possible it has been indicated how much space ought to be given to each country, due consideration being given to the importance of its statistical work, in order that the proposed volume may not assume too large a bulk.

Judging from comments on our plan, it is meeting with general approval also in this country. There will be much work to do; I do not look at the task lightly. But when it is done we may hope to have a memorial volume of lasting value as an authoritative reference book that will not only afford much information now unavailable, but will help to stimulate interest in statistics and statistical organization in many places. The welcome accorded the plan and the readiness of busy men to promote it, encourages one to believe that it will fill a want. It is surely a happy and dignified way of celebrating our anniversary to give the statistical world something it needs and which it is creditable to provide.

Because of the large amount of work to be done even after the various articles are in hand, for they will among other things, be written in many tongues, no date of publication can as yet be set, but we hope it will be some time in the latter half of 1914.

THE ANNIVERSARY MEETINGS.

Ordinarily, our gatherings are in the nature of a family affair. This time we should make them something more. The past of our Association and what it stands for have a meaning to those outside, and we should be remiss if we did not let them know about it. The implication is not that we wish to weary kindly disposed persons by recounting our own doings and achievements, but that we have an object which concerns them as well as ourselves. Moreover, we want active participation by universities, by other learned societies, and by individuals on an occasion like this. Therefore, representative guests will be invited and every effort used to make the anniversary the occasion of the most notable assembly of persons working or interested in statistics that has ever taken place in the United States. The success of it will depend largely upon the attendance of members, all of whom are urged to come even at possible inconvenience.

The dates fixed for the meetings are February 13 and 14, 1914, and the place Boston. There the Association had its birth, there it has always maintained headquarters, and it would be inappropriate at this time for us to offer hospitality elsewhere.

It is planned to have three sessions, a business meeting, and to close with a banquet.

No doubt one could easily devise sessions stretching out over several days, but the expediency of protracted meetings is not apparent. Technical papers and addresses belong to other occasions. At an anniversary like ours subjects of a more general nature are in place. The program has been fashioned with an eye to this. It is hoped that it will commend itself to all.

PROVISIONAL PROGRAM
OF THE
SEVENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY MEETING
OF THE
AMERICAN STATISTICAL ASSOCIATION

BOSTON, MASS., FEBRUARY 13-14, 1914.

First Session, Friday, February 13, at 8 P. M.

1. President's Address
2. The Development and Progress in Statistics During
Seventy-five Years, S. N. D. North
3. Brief Greetings by Invited Guests

Second Session, Saturday, February 14, at 10 A. M.

1. Co-operation between Academic and Official Statistics,
Walter F. Willcox
2. The Service of Statistics:
 - a. To Economics, David Kinley
 - b. To Sociology, F. H. Giddings
 - c. To History, C. H. Hull
 - d. To Biology, Raymond Pearl

Third Session, Saturday, February 14, at 2.30 P. M.

1. Economic and Social Progress of the United States
during Seventy-five Years, Frederick L. Hoffman
2. The Present Status of Statistical Work and How it
Needs to be Developed in the Service:
 - a. Of the Federal Government, W. S. Rossiter
 - b. Of States, Adna F. Weber
 - c. Of the Municipalities, F. Spencer Baldwin
 - d. Of Private Societies and Organizations, W. S.
Gifford

Saturday Evening—Banquet